

Very Good Joe
Rom. 12:1-2

20 pts

Joe Bustillos
BNTS 320 - ROMANS
BIBLICAL DOCTRINES

ADOPTION

BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM GAVE
HE POWER TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD, EVEN
TO THEM THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME;
- John 1:12

For you have not received the spirit of
bondage again to fear; but you have received
the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry,
Abba, Father. - Romans 8:15

The doctrine of Adoption is more readily understood as
an illustration of a spiritual reality. This reality, as
presented by the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 8, can be
understood as being a present position ("we have received..."),
and also as a future state of being:

And not only they, but ourselves also,
which have the firstfruits of the Spirit,
even we ourselves groan within ourselves,
waiting for the adoption, to wit, the
redemption of our body. (vs. 23)

We are understood as becoming adopted sons of God to express
the change in our status of being alienated from God to
having full access to the Father. This present reality is
simply another way of expressing our fellowship with God.
The future aspect of the doctrine comes into play as a
continuation of the analogy, that is, the full benefits of
sonship are generally realized at one's death (though in
this case it is our own death, our "putting off this body
of flesh"). Just so, our adoption shall be completely real-
ized at our death (if the Lord doesn't come first).

ELECTION

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)
- Romans 9:11

In Christian theology this normally refers to the divine choice of persons to salvation. There are differences of approach to this, however. Augustine, Luther, and Calvin all held a doctrine of unconditional election, in which the choice is sovereign and in no way dependent upon anything in man. Arminius and Wesley held that it was conditional and was dependent upon the individual's faith, foreseen by God. Darl Barth held that election applies primarily to Christ and so to mankind as seen in him. In the Barthian type of theology, therefore, election is not inconsistent with universalism, although by no means are all Barthians universalists.

In the OT, election terminology is applied to Abraham and to Israel, the election of which latter is a mystery of the divine love. The Son of God is seen in the NT to be God's Elect One (MT 12:18; LK 9:35; 1PT 2:4,6). Believers are chosen in Christ (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess.2:13). It is also according to divine foreknowledge, a term which has been understood historically in several ways. Christians are exhorted to make their calling and election sure, in a context which lays great emphasis on the moral qualities of Christian living (2 PT1:10).

SECURITY

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, not powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 8:38-39

Jesus said in John's gospel: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (JN 6:37). As there are those divided over the doctrine of election, so, often the same respective groups, are divided over the issue of "eternal" security.

The obvious reason for such a division is due to the approach that each group takes in addressing the doctrine. Those that hold to a form of "eternal" security (the same group that holds to the doctrine of Election) approaches the doctrine with the sovereignty of God in mind. Their logic follows that if the act of salvation was completely in the hands of God and that man's only part in it is to receive it by faith then it follows that there is nothing that can undo the act of God (even if the individual sins, because of the all-sufficient grace of God he is not cut off from God but suffers God's reproof as a disobedient son). Those that reject "eternal" security do so on the basis that any act (or omission) of sin severs our relationship with God (because God in His holiness cannot have anything to do with

sin regardless of the sinners past relation to Him). Therefore the only way that the fellowship (as understood in this system, salvation) can be restored is if the sinner repents and re-commits his life to the Savior.

While those that hold to a strict view of "eternal" security seem to have a bit more scriptural backing (at least in the NT), they nonetheless have to account for several passages that expound on man's responsibility (eg, Heb. 3: 7-19; 4:11). If there is no real threat of falling short once having believed then these passages would be meaningless.

SANCTIFICATION

But you are a chosen generation, a royal
priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;
that you should show forth the praises of
him who hath called you out of darkness
into his marvellous light:

- 1 Peter 2:9

The separation of one's entire being from all that is polluting and impure, and a renunciation of the sins toward which the desires of the flesh lead. Both the Greek "hagiasmos" and the biblical doctrine of sanctification disallow any idea of progressively becoming holy. What God has once made holy in election and redemption is always thereafter holy, and there can be no degrees in the state of absolute holiness. Our moral progress is not a growth into holiness out of a state of comparative unholiness, but a growth in holiness effected by a supernatural act of God. The Christian can and is expected to cooperate by the proper use of the means God makes available (Rom. 12:1,2), but it is God who does the all-important work (Gal.5:16-25). Sanctification involves the mortification of the old man (Col. 3:8-10; Rom. 6:6), and the giving of vitality to the new man, created in Christ unto good works.

Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield you your members as

as instruments of unrighteousness unto
sis: but yield yourselves unto God,
as those that are alive from the dead,
and your members as instruments of
righteousness unto God.

- Romans 6:11-13

FOREKNOWLEDGE

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. - Romans 8:29

In the OT one of the distinguishing facets of Yahweh was His foreknowledge:

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;
- Isaiah 46:9-10

Foreknowledge, correctly understood, doesn't speak of God's ability to foresee into the future but rather of His position terms of time. With God there is no past, present, or future, but simply the eternal "now,"..one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (1 PT 3:8). Time is a human/physical element. God grasps time (as even the whole universe) in the palm of his hand and molds it as he does the rest of creation.

Foreknowledge says that God sees the end from the beginning, not because He sees the line of time but because he sees the beginning and the end standing upon the same point. More importantly however, foreknowledge varifies God's sovereignty in terms of created universe.

PREDESTINATION

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. - Ephesians 1:4-5

In theology, predestination refers to the predetermination by God of the individual's ultimate destiny. Controversies regarding predestination have centered on the apparent contradiction between such predetermination and man's free will. The doctrine of predestination is associated particularly with Christianity, but also occurs elsewhere; in Islam. In the first centuries of the church, predestination was not an issue. Theological energy was taken up with definitions of the Trinity and arguments regarding the nature of Christ. In the Orthodox Churches this has remained the case.

In the Western Churches the issue was raised by Pelagius, who taught that man had the freedom to accept or reject God. This was countered by the great theologian Augustine, who held that man's will was enslaved by sin, that grace was needed to choose for God, and that this grace was given to those whom God had predestined.

Luther, Zwingli, Calvin --all held to predestination, the true church as made up of the elect, the enslavement of the will, the need for unconditioned grace to enable a

choice for God. Yet this strongly Augustinian approach did not escape criticism. In the Lutheran churches the fierce "synergistic" controversy of the later 1500s resulted from Melanchthon's attempt to save some role for the human will. Similar debates arose in Calvinism over the teachings of Arminius. Scholastic refinements in Protestant theology brought further disagreements: the Calvinist quarrels between sublapsarian and supralapsarian theologians, the controversy in the Huguenot churches over Amyraut's teachings, and the like. As Protestant Scholasticism declined during the 1700s and Pietism arose to regain a "heart-felt" religion, the question arose in Methodism: John Wesley favored "Arminianism," George Whitefield a "Calvinist Methodism."

In summary, predestination and the debates about it deal with a recurring problem, whether in theology or in other fields: the relation between man's freedom and a universe which seems in some sense determined.

GLORIFICATION

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God,
and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that
we suffer with him, that we may be also
glorified together. - Romans 8:17

The glorification of the saints is best understood
as a future completion of the saints: "When Christ, who
is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him
in glory" (Col. 3:4).

By the time of the NT the Greek term "doxa" when refer-
ing to God is synonymous with the "presence" of God. Obvious-
ly, when the glory of God is revealed at the eschaton we,
being co-heirs, shall also be "glorified" (completed).

Our future glorification also speaks of the intimacy
of our fellowship with God. Augustine wrote of our God-
shaped void and to see how God shall overwhelmingly fill
that void is indeed a vision of "glory." God's proximity,
His final dwelling (tabernacling) with mankind, the re-
storing of mankind to his created glory are all illustra-
tions of our future state.

Behold, now are we the sons of God, and
it doth not yet appear what we shall be:
but we know that, when he shall appear,
we shall be like him; for we shall see
him as he is. - 1 John 3:2

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BIBLICAL DOCTRINES - GRACE

Abbott-Smith's Manual Greek Lexicpn of the New Testament describes grace as divine favor with an emphasis on its freeness and universality. Having been raised a Catholic the term "grace" seemed very elusive. Our only contact with it was "through the Sacraments." (whatever that meant). Turning to Scripture, however, it becomes clear that grace is not a mystical "catch-all" term, used but rarely understood. Looking at its various uses in Scripture I found that its lowest common denominator to be very much like Abbott-Smith's definition. At its root is God's favor and the gift of His love.

Grace is not God ignoring our sins, for that would be contrary to God's just nature. It is rather God's favor towards us in light of Christ's death on our behalf. It is the power of God to justify us because of Christ's death and in responce to our faith (Rom. 3:24). It is power on God's side but faith on ours. Catholic teaching is that grace is the power in an individual life to live the Christian life, experienced with each participation in the sacraments. Scripture teaches that, yes it is the power of God, but it is the power of God to bring us into a right relationship with himself (Rom. 5:15; Eph. 2:5,8). It is commonly taught that God's declaration in 2 Corinthians 12:9 is some sort of divine power to strengthen the apostle during his trial with his thorn in the flesh. It would seem, however, to be more in keeping with its use in Scripture to understand that God is evoking Paul to remember his relationship/stance with God.

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The idea of man's depravity was used by Paul and the reformers to communicate against those who would ignore the all-sufficient atoning death of Christ on the cross and supplant it with salvation-by-works scheme. The line drawn is a very bold one. We are completely incapable to help ourselves, but this is no reason to despair; for God has responded in His love to atone for our crippling sin and to draw us into a relationship with Himself as adopted sons and daughters. It is no wonder, therefore, that a clear understanding of this doctrine (and God's response) produces joy (Romans 8:31-39).

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The idea of reconciliation is brought about by the results of our atonement, that is a renewed relationship with God.

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The current thought pertaining to the word's literal sense was first put forth by a Dr. Morris. His basic thesis is that the word communicates the idea of appeasement. Generally the idea of appeasing God is an abomination to our modern minds. Appeasement is fine for ignorant bushmen that do not understand the love of God, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Father of Jesus? No way.

It may be, however, closer to the Jewish understanding of the term. If understood in its Jewish context we have a rich full term. If we understand the Jewish idea of God's wrath and justice it becomes less of an obstacle to the "modern" mind. As communicated, especially in the book of Proverbs, upon the breaking of one of God's universal laws an automatic process of retribution is set in motion (eg., Proverbs ch. 7). It would, therefore, seem consistent, regardless of ones view of the Creator, to offer a sacrifice to short-circuit God's "wrath service."

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Paul, in Romans 5:10 clearly expresses this (the former) understanding of the term; that is, two parties who were once at enmity towards one another are bought into a renewed relationship.

The question is raised, who is reconciled to whom? It would seem on the onset that seeing as we were the ones who rejected God that we were reconciled to Him. But the truth of the matter is that if we are to experience true reconciliation than both parties have to realign their understanding of one another. It is not just us receiving God's "plan of salvation" but also God receiving us (in Christ) as His own adopted sons and daughters.

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To the Hebrew people the idea of knowing but not acting was completely foreign. They were a wholistic people that believed that to truly know something was to allow it to permeate ones life, and that the depth of ones knowledge could be easily ascertained by the consistency of ones actions. Faith, therefore, is not an intellectual ascension nor is it a non-intellectual wish. It is a motion or movement of the whole being. It can be illustrated in a man taking a step forward. In taking a step the man does not leave behind his spirit, nor is he able to take a step without his body.

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*Several are a bit short.
otherwise O.K. 18*

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